

IPS REPORT SERIES

Report No. 3

SINGAPOREANS OVERSEAS: A STUDY OF
EMIGRANTS IN AUSTRALIA AND CANADA*

by

Yap Mui Teng



THE INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES

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March 1991

* Embargoed until after press briefing on 28 March 1991

1. INTRODUCTION

Since it was first raised by former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in October 1987, the subject of the emigration of Singaporeans has occupied much public and private discourse in recent years. The salience of the phenomenon in the mind of the government, it is said, is reflected in the former Prime Minister's 1989 National Day Rally speech when he spoke at length on the subject. Emigration has also been the subject of numerous speeches made by various government Ministers and Members of Parliament. The prominence given to this issue followed somewhat startling revelations on the number of Certificates of No Criminal Conviction or Good Conduct Certificates (GCCs) issued to would-be migrants in recent years. The total number of GCCs issued over the three year period 1986-1988 was 10,546. The figure for 1988 alone was 4,707 as compared to about 2,000 only two years earlier (Cheung 1991).¹ The available data revealed, moreover, that the would-be emigrants were disproportionately the better-educated Singaporeans, with GCE 'A' Levels and higher qualifications (The Straits Times 30 July 1989). These figures were viewed with alarm and treated as constituting a "brain drain" from Singapore which, owing to its small size, has presumably only a small talent pool to begin with. Further, the prognosis is for the indigenous population to diminish as a result of continued below-replacement fertility. The former Prime Minister warned of Singapore being "creamed" of its talents unless the emigration issue was dealt with squarely.

1

Although Cheung uses the abbreviations, CNCC, these are more commonly known as GCCs.

Emerging Issues

Three main issues emerged in the discussions that ensued. The first concerned the causes of emigration. The emigration rate from Singapore has been compared to that from Hong Kong and the Philippines (San Francisco Chronicle 10 January 1990; and Gunasekaran and Sullivan, 1990). While the reasons for Hongkongers and Filipinos to emigrate are eminently clear to many, the motivations for emigration from Singapore appear puzzling because the country is apparently thriving and free from the political threats that Hong Kong faces.² The then First Deputy Prime Minister Mr Goh Chok Tong explained the reason for the government's concern with the causes of emigration as follows: "... Those who leave are a loss to us. We would like them to stay, which is why we are looking into the reasons for their emigration" (Speeches '89 September-October 1989). A spate of articles and letters appeared in the local media suggesting various reasons ranging from materialistic gains -- having access to bigger cars and houses -- to a more relaxed lifestyle, political freedom, and children's education. Much of the discussion to date, however, has been based on anecdotes, and sometimes speculation, rather than empirical data.

A related issue that emerged concerned the introduction of measures to stem the outflow. Except for criminals and those liable for active or reservist National Service, Singaporeans have always enjoyed the liberty to freely move in and out of the country. There are no exit taxes or other controls in Singapore. The commitment to maintain this policy was recently reiterated by the then Minister of State for Finance and Foreign Affairs B.G. (Res) George Yeo, when he ruled out the policy of erecting barriers to emigration (The Straits Times 20 November 1989). The government prefers instead

² See, for example, a letter to the Editor entitled "Singaporeans have little reason to want to leave" published in The Straits Times 14 November 1990.

to improve the quality of life in Singapore and to make it as attractive as possible for citizens to stay (The Straits Times 11 December 1989). Its decision to utilize this strategy is based on the feedback received that Singaporeans emigrate to countries like Australia and Canada for a "better quality of life." The latter, however, is a nebulous concept that requires further definition. A Straits Times editorial on 12 December 1989 undertook this task but all of its suggested measures of a better quality of life were materialistic ones. Hence, it also enjoined the population to work harder in order to generate more wealth to satisfy these needs, an opinion not likely to be shared by those who consider life in Singapore already a "rat race" and reason enough for emigration. Other Straits Times readers also contributed their ideas of a better quality of life, often idyllic and idealistic, based on their own overseas experiences.

Yet a third issue that emerged concerned Singapore's relationship with the communities of Singaporeans overseas. In the past, the government's attitude towards emigrants was somewhat nonchalant and even downright negative. For example, in 1987 the former Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew reportedly said that if Singaporeans emigrated because they felt they can have a better life overseas, "... good luck to you. We feel we can get a Canadian or Australian to come to Singapore and work or a Malaysian, or a Thai, or an Indonesian ..." (The Straits Times 20 October 1987). Since that time, there has been a change in the way emigrants are perceived by the government, from being traitors and failures to possible allies and potential contributors to Singapore's growth. As both Mr Goh Chok Tong and B.G. (Res) George Yeo explained, Singapore's small size makes it imperative that she looked outwards for continued progress (The Straits Times 20 November 1989 and

18 April 1990; Speeches '90 January-February 1990). Singaporeans living and working overseas can assist Singapore's internationalization effort, and the idea of "Singapore International," a network of Singaporeans overseas with ties among themselves and with the country, is being actively promoted. The formation of Singapore clubs overseas is a step towards this end, and measures are being thought of to bring Overseas Singaporeans and their children home. By introducing measures to draw Overseas Singaporeans to return, Singapore will be following in the footsteps of countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, India and Pakistan (The Straits Times 27 June 1990).

Scope and Significance of Study

This study of Overseas Singaporeans addresses the issue of emigration from Singapore from three perspectives, viz. (i) the motivation for emigration; (ii) adjustments in the overseas communities; and (iii) the attitudes of Overseas Singaporeans towards Singapore and prospects for linkages. The term "Overseas Singaporeans" is used here to refer to Singaporeans and ex-Singaporeans living outside the country more or less permanently, that is, they have either acquired citizenship or permanent residence in their adopted countries or are about to do so. In many ways, this is an exploratory study and possibly the first systematic study of its kind. Previous studies of Singaporeans living overseas have been made by journalists, particularly in the Chinese media (see, for example, Yazhou Zhoukan 28 January 1990). The research methodology and sample selection techniques used by

the journalists are not known, however, and neither is the representativeness of the sample selected.

The study of Overseas Singaporeans can provide valuable insight for policy-makers to identify the factors that "push" Singaporeans to leave and the goals or values which they hope to achieve by emigrating. This will in turn help in the formulation of policies to stem the outflow of the talent pool. Some feedback have already been collected through interviews with would-be migrants on their reasons for emigration (Sullivan and Gunasekaran 1989; The Straits Times 14 December 1989). These may, however, only be socially acceptable answers. A study of those already living overseas is likely to reveal more facets of the decision to emigrate. As the respondents are already outside Singapore, their responses on the reasons for their leaving may be taken as more valid. The usual scepticism in dismissing the reasons given by intending Singaporean emigrants would not be valid. Critics of studies on intending emigrants may agree that this is the best possible means to establish the true reasons for Singaporeans wanting to settle abroad.

The study of Overseas Singaporeans also provides an insight into the adaptation of Singaporeans in the overseas communities. The ability of the Overseas Singaporeans to adjust and integrate into the local society is likely to affect their desire to return. Those who are well-adjusted are less likely to want to return than the maladjusted. Willingness to return or to participate in Singapore's internationalization is also likely to be affected by feelings of attachment to and the maintenance of continued contacts with the country. Hence both of these aspects of the adaptation of Singaporeans overseas are examined as well. The Overseas Singaporeans are in a unique position to make comparisons between Singapore and their adopted country

and to identify areas of mutual cooperation. Having lived and gained experiences in a different environment, the Overseas Singaporeans are also likely to be better equipped to suggest ways by which the idea of "Singapore International" can be realized.

II. METHODOLOGY

This section describes the research methodology adopted in the study of Overseas Singaporeans. It describes the research design, and the sample selection and data collection techniques used, as background for a better understanding of the results obtained. The limitations of the findings are also discussed.

Although emigration has been a part of Singapore's demographic history since time immemorial, information on the strength and characteristics of the outflows from the country is scarce even today. This is due to the laissez-faire policy adopted towards emigration until recently. The implication of this paucity of data for research is that there is no comprehensive sampling frame from which to draw a representative sample of Overseas Singaporeans for study.

Research Design

The sample for study comprises 100 Overseas Singaporeans. For convenience and cost-effectiveness, the study was confined to the two countries shown in the available data to be the two main destinations of choice of recent Singaporeans emigrants, viz. Australia and Canada (The Straits Times 21 October 1987 and 21 August 1989). The respondents were drawn from major cities in the two countries with known concentrations of Singaporeans and ex-Singaporeans, as follows:

Country	City	Number of Respondents
Australia	Perth, Sydney	50
Canada	Vancouver	50
Total		100

It is estimated that a sample size of 100 respondents, purposively selected, would be sufficiently large to generate a cross-section of responses. The advantage of purposive sampling is that the researcher uses his or her judgement about which respondents to choose and pick only those who best meet the purposes of the study (Bailey, 1982). In this study, purposive sampling is combined with the "snow-balling" technique discussed below to obtain the required sample size.

Respondent Selection

Respondent selection took place in two stages. In the first stage, a few eligible respondents in each city were identified either with the help of the Singapore clubs in the cities or through personal recommendations. Subsequently, the respondents were asked to suggest their personal contacts who met the selection requirements (see below). This use of the "snow-balling" technique overcomes a potential pitfall in the selection of all respondents from among the membership of the Singapore club in that the latter may comprise special interest groups who are thus biased in their opinions.

The following criteria were adopted in the selection of the respondents:

- i. Respondents must at some time have been Singapore citizens by birth or by naturalisation;
- ii. They must either have renounced their Singapore citizenship or have the intention to remain permanently in the country of current domicile, for example, by holding permanent resident status;

- iii. At least 80% of the sample must comprise single Singaporeans or couples where one spouse is or has been a Singapore citizen and the other a Singapore permanent resident, and the remaining 20% divided between Singaporean men and women married to foreign spouses;
- iv. Respondents must also be adults within the economically active age range i.e. below 65 years old;
- v. As far as possible, the respondents should be selected from a cross-section of the population based on sex, income level, educational level and occupation.

Data Collection

Personal, face-to-face interviews using a questionnaire (Appendix I) were conducted in each of the three cities by a team of four trained interviewers. Data collection in Perth took place over the period 1-11 March 1990, in Sydney from 13-24 March, and in Vancouver from 9 February until 4 April. Depending on individual preference, the respondents were interviewed either at their homes or their places of work. Respondents were also assured that their identities will be kept confidential, and this has been strictly adhered to.

Limitations

As mentioned, the sample of respondents included for study has been purposively selected to ensure that a cross-section of opinions are represented. This serves the purpose well of an exploratory study like the present one on Overseas Singaporeans. The findings reported in this paper pertain only to the 100 cases selected for study and cannot be generalized for all Overseas Singaporeans. The contribution of this study lies in the fact that this is possibly the first systematic study of its kind.

Bias could also result if respondents differed in significant ways from those who refused to be interviewed. Indeed, in the process of respondent selection, the interviewers were told by key respondents, and also personally encountered non-respondents, who not only refused to participate in the survey but were also adamant that they wanted to have nothing to do with Singapore. For obvious reasons, the views of such non-respondents were not included in the findings.

III. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

This section profiles the socio-economic and migration characteristics of the Overseas Singaporeans studied. It not only serves as a background for a better understanding of the findings reported but also fills a gap in present knowledge about emigration from Singapore. Whereas the GCC statistics provide information on the characteristics of would-be emigrants, the data obtained in this study pertain to those who have actually left and remained in the foreign countries. This study also provides some data on family migration which are not available from the GCC statistics. The limitation of this study notwithstanding, the findings are useful for some previously unknown dimensions of the emigration phenomenon.

Socio-economic Characteristics

There were a total of 100 respondents in the study, as called for in the study design. Half of the respondents were drawn from Australia, specifically from the cities of Perth and Sydney. Of the remaining 50 respondents, all were Vancouver residents except for five who were visitors to the city from other Canadian cities.

Seventy-seven percent of the respondents were Chinese, 5% Malays, 15% Indians and 3% "Others" (Table 1). While the ethnic distribution of the Australian respondents³ more nearly reflect the ethnic distribution of the Singapore population, there were no Malay respondents in the Canadian sample.

Male respondents outnumbered females by a ratio of nearly four to one. Seventy-six percent (38) of the Australian respondents were male and 24% (12) were

³ The terms "Australian respondents" and "Canadian respondents" are used as shorthand for the Overseas Singaporeans interviewed in the two countries. They do not necessarily indicate citizenship.

female while the proportions of males and females in the Canadian sample were 78% (39 respondents) and 22% (11 respondents) respectively. All but 12 respondents in the sample were married; the unmarried comprised 9 singles, a widow and two divorcees. The sex ratio of the respondents reflects a preference among couples for the husband to be interviewed if he was eligible, and not the sex ratio of Overseas Singaporeans.

The age range of the respondents was from 28 to 56 years. The mean age among the Australian respondents was 43.0 years and among the Canadian respondents 39.9 years. This age differential reflects a slightly larger proportion of the older respondents in the Australian sample.

The respondents were heavily concentrated in the higher educational echelon, with 68% who were degree holders and 18% holding 'A' levels or equivalent qualifications. There was a higher proportion of degree holders in the Canadian sample as compared to the Australian sample.

Migration Characteristics

The respondents were predominantly recent migrants, with 57% having left Singapore during 1985-1990 period (Table 2). Together with the 16% who departed during the period 1980-1984, a total of 73% of the respondents emigrated during the decade of the 1980s. In comparison, 7% departed during the 1960s and 20% during the 1970s. There were slightly more recent migrants in the Canadian sample than in the Australian sample. The average age of the respondents at the time of departure from Singapore was 34.2 years for the Australian sample and 33.7 years among the Canadian sample.

All but 8% of the respondents held permanent resident visas at the time of their arrival in their respective adopted countries. The remaining respondents had either student visas (4%), employment visas (3%) or Australian citizenship (1%; obtained while the respondent was residing in a third country). The majority, 88%, of the respondents moved directly from Singapore to their present adoptive country. The remaining 12% (comprising 8% of the Australian and 16% of the Canadian respondents) had resided elsewhere.

Table 2 shows further that the respondents typically migrated as a family. At the time of their arrival in Australia and Canada, 68% of the Australian respondents and 82% of the Canadian respondents were accompanied by their family members. The average number of accompanying family members among the Australian respondents was 2.10 and among the Canadian respondents, it was 1.76. Further, nearly half of the respondents were joined by family members or relatives, typically their siblings and in-laws, after their move. Only a minority (28% of the Australian respondents and 18% of the Canadian respondents), however, sponsored the emigration of these joining family members and relatives. The magnitudes of these migration chains are difficult to estimate as the respondents tended not to report the spouses and children of their siblings and in-laws who emigrated after them. There are, moreover, no information on family members who emigrated before the respondents.

Data on the respondent's place of birth show that 81% of the respondents (comprising 74% of the Australian respondents and 88% of the Canadian respondents) were Singapore citizens by birth. Another 18% (mainly Malaysian-born) were migrants to Singapore. By the time of the study, nearly half of the respondents (46% and 50% of the Australian and Canadian respondents respectively) had adopted the citizenship

of their respective countries of domicile. All the remaining respondents had permanent resident status, except for one Australian respondent who was in the process of converting his temporary employment visa to a permanent resident visa.

IV. MOTIVATIONS FOR EMIGRATION

As mentioned in the introductory section, a major objective of this study was to identify the motivations for emigration among Overseas Singaporeans. To obtain this information, two approaches were adopted in the study. First, an open-ended question was posed to the respondents thus: "People choose to migrate for a variety of reasons. Can you please tell me your/your family's reasons for migrating?" In the second approach, respondents were asked to rate the level of importance to themselves personally of a set of twenty migration-related goals or values and then their expectations of attaining each goal in Singapore and their adoptive country. The set of goals or values presented to the respondents was adapted from a larger set developed by DeJong and Fawcett for use in the Philippine Migration Study (DeJong and Fawcett, 1981). The goals or values have been selected on the basis of theoretical considerations and literature review to represent seven conceptual categories, viz. wealth, status, comfort, stimulation, autonomy, affiliation and morality (Arnold and Abad, 1985). The results of this exercise can provide useful information on the tradeoffs in goals or values involved in the Singaporean emigration process.

A likely source of bias in the study of the reasons for emigration among people who have already migrated is recall. For some of the respondents, the decision to emigrate was made about thirty years before the interview date. Error may occur due to faulty memory, selective recall or post-hoc rationalization. These limitations notwithstanding, there are reasons to believe that the responses given by those who are already out of the country may be more valid in that the desire to give socially (or politically) acceptable answers, for whatever reasons, is reduced.

Push and Pull Factors Affecting Migration

Responses to the open-ended question on the reasons for emigration are presented in Table 3. The responses have been coded and categorised according to whether it is a "push" or a "pull" factor. The former refers to some conditions at origin (i.e. Singapore) that "pushed" the respondents to leave; and the latter, to conditions at the destination (i.e. Australia or Canada) that "pulled" or attracted them to it. The residual of the responses are grouped under the "Others" category.

The data show that the Australian and Canadian respondents emphasized a different set of factors in their decision to emigrate. The most frequently cited "push" factor, and the most important factor overall, among the Australian respondents was "children's education" (cited by 34%). This broad category includes problem with second language, the quality of education in Singapore (viz. high pressure and lack in developing creative thinking), the limited number of university places available and consequent concern about the affordability of overseas university education for their children. There are several features of the Australian education system that make it attractive to Singaporeans. The similarity in the education systems of Australia and the former British colonies such as Singapore and Malaysia contributes to the choice of this country for a foreign education (Gunasekaran and Sullivan, 1990). Besides being a relatively inexpensive source of tertiary education as compared to the United States and the United Kingdom, Australia also makes education available free of charge to those who have acquired permanent resident status in the country. By becoming a permanent resident, the Singaporean parent can save on the often formidable expenses that could be incurred in providing their children with an overseas education. It is therefore also an economically rational option for parents who cannot realistically

expect their children to qualify for the limited number of places available for tertiary education in Singapore. Besides this, the Australian curriculum is also thought to be less stressful and more "rounded" (including non-academic subjects) than Singapore's and the children are not compelled to study a second language up to a level which may be beyond their competence.

Another "push" factor, cited by 22%, concerned the socio-economic and political environment in Singapore which was described as regimented, unbalanced and over-dominated by work concerns, lacking in compassion and intolerant of failure. The other "push" factors cited were concern over the future security of Singapore, the constraints imposed by the country's small size, national service policies and bureaucratic reasons, but these were relatively less frequently mentioned (4% to 8%). More significantly, personal frustrations with their jobs or businesses were cited by about one quarter (24%) of the Australian respondents as contributors to their decision to emigrate. These frustrations, however, are more likely to have been precipitating rather than underlying causes. Among the "pull" factors cited, the economic opportunities offered by Australia ranked foremost (20%), followed by educational opportunities (12%) and the socio-economic and political environment in Australia (12%). The ease of obtaining a visa, Australia's physical environment and familiarity with the country were additional attractions, cited by 8%, 6% and 4% respectively.

Among the Canadian respondents, the main contributors to emigration were the socio-economic and political environments in Singapore and in Canada, cited by 38% and 36% respectively. More than Australia, Canada was also seen as a country with economic opportunities, with 32% of the Canadian respondents citing this reason as compared to only 20% for Australia. The presence of family members in Canada and

the security offered by the country were some of the factors that contributed to emigration there (cited by 10% and 4% respectively) which were not mentioned by the Australian respondents. On the other hand, concern with their children's education, a major factor among the Australian respondents, did not seem an important factor among the Canadian respondents.

A comparison of the relative weightage given overall by the Australian and Canadian respondents to each of the push and pull factors shown in Table 3 suggests different explanations for the emigration of these two groups. While the former were driven more by personal, and more situational, considerations to emigrate, the motivation for the latter may more appropriately be understood within a systemic framework, involving social, economic and political considerations in both the sending and receiving countries and the interaction between these (see Gunasekaran and Sullivan, 1990). This difference between the two groups of emigrants has important implications for the government's effort at establishing ties with them and is likely to affect the outcome differently (these are discussed in detail in the final section of this paper on conclusions and policy recommendations).

Factors Affecting Choice of Destination

Table 4 shows the different responses to an open-ended question on the respondents' reasons for choosing Australia and Canada respectively. Its proximity to Singapore was the most important factor contributing to the choice of Australia over other destinations, this being cited by 38% of the Australian respondents. Australia's climate and physical environment also contributed to the choice of this country for 26% while business or job opportunities occupied third place with 20%. The presence of

friends and relatives in the country and familiarity with the country as a result of having visited or lived there (12% and 10% respectively) were less important reasons for choosing Australia than they were for Canada where they ranked together with economic opportunities and physical environment (24% and 18%) as the top reasons for choosing the country. The influence of earlier emigrants, ease of obtaining visas, educational opportunities and marriage were the other reasons cited for choosing these two countries. Canada's proximity to the United States was also a factor in its favour.

Values and Expectancies

Tables 5A-C show the relative importance of a series of goals or values to the respondents and their subjective evaluation of the likelihood of attaining each goal in their adopted country and in Singapore. Contrary to the popular belief that Singaporeans emigrate for an easy life, Table 5A shows that "having a job that is not too strenuous" did not rank as a very important goal among either group of respondents. Similarly, there was low value among both groups, but particularly among the Canadian respondents, for the status goals on "having a prestigious job" and "being looked up to in the community." Rather the respondents, particularly those from Canada, emphasized peace, health, morality, autonomy, economic security (but not necessarily a high income) and stimulation. Although the respondents also placed high value on having people to rely on in times of need, they nevertheless placed a low value on being near friends and relatives and being in a familiar environment. This is probably because with the Singaporeans' cosmopolitan outlook and a self-sufficient

attitude, greater reliance is placed on institutional rather than personal sources of assistance.

Table 5B compares the Australian respondents' subjective rating of their likelihood of attaining each goal in Australia and in Singapore. As to be expected, the ratings were higher for Australia than for Singapore on the majority of the important goals or values shown in the previous table. The ratings for Australia and Singapore differed the most on the items on autonomy and educational opportunities. Australia was also perceived as a more likely place than Singapore in which to obtain a not-too-strenuous job although this was not an important goal. There was, however, a tradeoff involved. By emigrating, they were also less likely to attain some of their valued goals such as having a high income, having people to rely on in times of need and having a feeling of belonging in the community. Some respondents, in responding to a question on the problems that Singaporeans are likely to face when settling down in Australia, pointed out that they may have to settle for lower level jobs than they were used to in Singapore, at least temporarily. Another respondent (#14)⁴ estimated that "a lot" of the business migrants who set up their own businesses were not doing too well and had to live on their savings. Judging by the responses, female migrants were the more likely ones to feel displaced and isolated, particularly if they did not work. There were, however, formal and informal support groups available for assistance, including churches which appeared to occupy an important place among the Overseas Singaporeans studied. Some of the respondents revealed that they

⁴ To ensure their anonymity, the respondents have been assigned numbers which are indicated here by figures in parentheses preceded by the hex (#) sign.

belonged to churches where the membership was almost exclusively Asian or comprised mainly Singaporeans and Malaysians.

For the Canadian respondents, on the other hand, Table 5C shows that Canada was rated higher than Singapore as the place that could satisfy the respondents' important goals or values, and even some of the not-so-important ones. The biggest differences in the subjective ratings of Canada and Singapore can be found for the items on job ease, autonomy, morality and stimulation in terms of variety in entertainment and people. Singapore was rated higher than Canada only on two items relating to affiliation, viz. to be in a familiar environment and being near friends and relatives, both of which were not highly rated life goals in any case. For the Canadian respondents, the tradeoff involved in emigration was economic security in old age but even in this respect, Singapore was rated only marginally better than Canada.

Discussion

The findings on the motivations for emigration presented in this section point to a number of structural factors in the Singapore environment that have contributed to the emigration of some Singaporeans. These factors concerned the socio-economic and political environment and the institution of certain policies in Singapore, particularly those on education. While competition, conformity and restraints may be seen by the government as the necessary sacrifices that Singaporeans must make for the nation's survival, this definition of the situation could be at odds with the aspirations of a segment of the Singapore population causing them to emigrate. As

the Singapore population becomes increasingly affluent and better educated, it is likely that some Singaporeans are beginning to aspire for "higher" goals such as peace, health, comfort, freedom and stimulation. Being better educated, travelled and informed also frees some Singaporeans from being overly shackled by fears of the unknown, communal or community attachment and the aversion to risk taking. As the data on values and expectancies show, the respondents were optimistic about attaining these goals, and more, in their respective adopted countries.

As a suggestion for further research, it would be interesting to apply the values and expectancies to a sample of non-migrants or the general Singapore population to elicit information on how migrants and stayers differ in their value orientations. This will further isolate the necessary and sufficient conditions for emigration.

V. ADJUSTMENT IN OVERSEAS COMMUNITIES

This section examines the economic, social, cultural and political adjustments of Singaporeans in the overseas communities. The previous section showed that the Overseas Singaporeans emigrate to satisfy a number of goals such as peace, health, comfort, autonomy, a stimulating environment and the betterment of their children. From the point of view of social integration, Singaporeans can expect to have few adjustment problems in such English-speaking environments as Australia and Canada. Successful adjustment in terms of the attainment of these goals and ability to integrate are likely to affect the Overseas Singaporeans' attitudes and desire to return to Singapore.

Economic Adjustment

In this study, economic adjustment is examined in respect of the Overseas Singaporeans' occupational status, income and saving, and standard of living. What is of importance here is not the absolute levels of income, occupation or standard of living attained in the overseas communities but the level relative to expectations and to their status prior to emigration. This is because satisfaction with the outcomes of the move is likely to be affected by the perception of relative success or deprivation.

In terms of occupational status, Table 6 shows that both groups of respondents suffered some initial set-back upon their arrival in their respective adopted countries as compared to their status in Singapore. In particular, the proportion of the Canadian respondents who either did not work or who were sales and services or other unskilled workers increased while the proportion of professionals declined dramatically (from 38% to only 10%). Although there was an increase in the proportion of the

professionals by the time the study was conducted, the group had not recovered its pre-emigration occupational distribution. Among the Australian respondents, changes in the occupational distributions just after arrival were minimal. There was also a considerable increase in the proportion of administrators and managers at the time of the study as compared to their pre-emigration and immediate post-emigration occupational distributions. This was mainly due to the increase in the self-employed.

Table 6 also presents the distribution of the respondents by household income at the time of the interviews. Responses to a question on whether their current incomes were higher, the same or lower than what they could have received in Singapore show the financial consequences of emigration were mixed. For 36% of the respondents in each country, their household income at the time of the study represented an increase over the level they could have received in Singapore had they not emigrated, hence the move was a beneficial one from the financial perspective. Another 34% of the Australian respondents and 38% of the Canadian respondents estimated that they were financially worse off in their present country while for the remaining respondents (20% and 22% respectively), there was no difference. Nearly half of the respondents in each country, however, reported that they were able to save better than in Singapore. This could possibly be because of cheaper necessities, subsidies provided by the governments, and a strategy to purchase the more costly items from Singapore on their visits home (in this sense, the Overseas Singaporeans have the best of both worlds). In responding to this question, some of the respondents might have included their Central Provident Fund (CPF) contributions as part of their savings in Singapore while others might have excluded this component in their reckoning of their savings.

In terms of the standard of living, the majority of the Australian respondents (60%) rated themselves as being better off now than when they were in Singapore and nearly half (46%) estimated that they were better off than they could expect to be had they remained in Singapore. Besides the usual comments on the affordability of more and larger cars, larger houses with larger plots of land and personal swimming pools, the Australian respondents stressed in particular the non-material aspects of living such as having more time to spend with the family, enjoyment of more family-based activities and nature (in parks and recreational facilities that are provided free of charge) and time for spiritual pursuits. The weather or climate was also a plus for some respondents. Few, however, reported enjoying more cultural activities, mainly for reason of lack of interest. The gains reported by the respondents were counterbalanced by comments on having to perform more self-help activities, particularly household chores. Slowness of service or inefficiency was another complaint of the Overseas Singaporeans.

The dominant perception among the Canadian respondents was that their standard of living had not changed with emigration. This could, in part, be due to the down-grading in employment they often had to endure, at least temporarily (see above). As shown in the next section, the Canadian respondents were also optimistic about life in Canada.

Social Adjustment

Social adjustment may be studied objectively by examining objective indicators such as the nature of the migrants' friendship network and the extent of their participation in local clubs and organizations. A predominance of friendships with

Singaporeans or ex-Singaporeans and fellow migrants of other nationalities is indicative of, and likely to be, a barrier to integration. So also is exclusive participation in ethnic or communal-based organizations likely to hinder integration. Besides these objective measures, the study also includes a question on the respondents' perceptions of discrimination, or conversely, their perceptions of their acceptance by the dominant community.

The respondents in both countries appeared to have wide social networks. The majority of the respondents in both countries reported that Singaporeans, ex-Singaporeans and other immigrants constituted less than half of their friendship networks (see Table 7). In fact, nearly one third (32%) claimed that at least half of their friends were "locals." The respondents from Canada were more likely than those from Australia to have friends that were predominantly locals (44% as compared to 32%). The figures have to be treated with caution, however, as some of the respondents did not differentiate between Singaporeans, Malaysians and other Asians, while others distinguished only between Singaporeans and all other national groups.

The majority of the Canadian respondents, 62%, did not belong to any club or organization as compared to only 14% of the Australian respondents. The difference in the participation rates could be due to the recency of the Canadian respondents' arrival in Canada. More interestingly, the Canadian respondents who participated were more likely to belong to local, non-communal organizations than communal-based ones. On the other hand, the Australians were more likely to belong to communal-based clubs or organizations (see Table 7).

Perception of discrimination in daily life was low among both the Australian and the Canadian respondents (Table B). The Australian respondents, however, were

more likely than their Canadian counterparts to perceive discrimination in schools and in employment. The lower score obtained for the Australian sample was due to the fact that a larger proportion of the Australian than the Canadian sample disagreed with the statements: 8% of the Australian respondents felt that their children were being discriminated against in school and 22% that they were not likely to be promoted in their jobs like their White colleagues, whereas none of the Canadian respondents reported similar feelings. It should be noted, however, that the majority of the Australian respondents (6 out of 11) who claimed discrimination on the job front were either self-employed or working for Singaporean companies, hence their responses were perceptual and not necessarily reflective of their experiences.

Cultural Adjustment

Cultural adjustment as measured by participation in the religious and secular rituals and festivities of the adopted country was low among the Australian respondents as compared to the Canadian respondents. This lack of participation was, however, attributed by the respondents to the local attitude towards such festivities -- "The Australians don't celebrate anything, they just drink." The Australian respondents' attitude towards the nation's holidays and festivals was simply that of a deserved rest day or an educational opportunity for their children. The Canadian respondents reported participating in an array of Canadian religious and secular festivals such as Canada Day and Thanksgiving.

Also, unlike the Canadian respondents who tended not to celebrate Singaporean holidays other than Chinese New Year and Diwali (Deepavali), the Australian respondents were more likely to celebrate Singaporean festivals and

holidays. The Australian respondents appeared more keen to keep in touch with Singaporean customs and traditions "for the sake of the children -- for them to know and keep in touch with their roots." This perhaps explains the Australian respondents' choice of the country for its proximity to Singapore. As will be shown in the next section, the Australian respondents were less negative towards Singapore than their Canadian counterparts.

Political Adjustment

In the literature on migrant adaptation, the adoption of the citizenship in the new country can be taken as indicative of the highest commitment to it (see Arnold 1987, for example). For Singaporeans, this also involves the ultimate sacrifice of foregoing citizenship rights in Singapore since the country disallows dual citizenship. In spite of this constraint, nearly half of the respondents had adopted the citizenship of their country of current domicile by the time of the interviews (Table 9). Although it was not asked specifically, some of the Australian respondents volunteered their reasons for renouncing their Singapore citizenship. These were either to withdraw their CPF savings (because of need or rumours about possible changes to withdrawal rules affecting the repatriation of the funds overseas) or so that their sons will not have to serve National Service. Others presumably changed their citizenship because they had lived there for an extended period of time or because they were married to Australians. Among those who had not acquired Australian or Canadian citizenship, nearly all the Canadian respondents planned to do so while the Australian attitude tended to be one of "wait and see."

Political participation in terms of participation in the voting process is shown in Table 9. Thirty-eight percent of the Australian respondents and 30% of the Canadian respondents had voted in an election in their respective adoptive countries. Among those who had not voted, the main reason was ineligibility (because they were not yet citizens). The proportion who had voted was lower than the proportion who were citizens, probably because citizenship was acquired only after the most recent elections.

The proportion of respondents who had spoken publicly on social or political issues was low in both countries (only about one in five have done so). Lack of interest was the main reason for this passivity on the part of the Australian respondents while for the Canadians, there was no perceived need to do so. The Canadian respondents also felt that they should allow themselves more time to study the country and issues.

Discussion

The Overseas Singaporeans included in this study appear on the whole to be satisfied with their lives in the respective overseas communities. There were few reports of racism, and indeed, a few were indignant when they were questioned on their perception of discrimination. According to the respondents, adjustment problems stemmed more from the mental attitudes held by the migrants themselves than from institutionalized racism. They felt that those who emigrate must be prepared to change their mental attitudes and to accept changes and certain inconveniences. Otherwise, the Singaporeans' facility with English and the accepting attitude of the host societies posed no special problems for the Singaporean emigrants. In fact,

Singaporeans were reportedly held in high regard by the local inhabitants and by their employers in both Canada and Australia.

VI. RETURNING TO SINGAPORE

In this section, the respondents' willingness to return permanently to Singapore are examined together with a subjective and an objective measure of their ties to Singapore. Such information can point out the ways by which Overseas Singaporeans can be incorporated into Singapore's internationalization strategy and their willingness to participate in it.

Willingness to Return

Table 10 shows that the Australian and Canadian respondents differed greatly in their willingness to return to Singapore. When asked whether they or their family members would want to return to Singapore, practically all of the Canadian respondents replied in the negative, except for 8% (4 respondents) who were not sure. In comparison, the Australian respondents appeared to be keeping their options open (46% either said "maybe" or "depends"). Only 28% (14 respondents) were firm in not wanting to return to Singapore while 18% indicated a positive desire to return. For some of these respondents, it was their children who have expressed a desire to return while they were themselves neutral or negative on the subject. The difference in attitude between the two groups of respondents is consistent with the finding in the previous section that the Canadians were more willing than the Australians to take up citizenship in their adoptive country. Another possible reason could be the higher psychic and financial costs involved in the move to Canada as compared to Australia. As one respondent (#65) put it, "I can't imagine how it'd be possible after one has moved lock, stock and barrel, and invested time and money here, to up and leave again." To quote another respondent (#56), "... the move here has been a major one -- uprooting

the family, etc. It would be irresponsible to reverse the decision without investing your best time and energy into making a go of it here." While recognizing that problems of economic survival may drive other Singaporeans, or even themselves, to want to return to Singapore, there was a sense of optimism among the Canadian respondents about being able to pull through in Canada. One respondent (#75), in responding to the question on the conditions under which Singaporeans were likely to return, said that they would only do so if they could not "make it" there but in his estimation, that was most unlikely to happen. According to another respondent (#55), "I can only speculate that they'll do so only if opportunities for themselves and their families here are no longer available. And ... that's unlikely." Or another respondent (#59), "... if it makes better business sense to work out of Singapore, then maybe I'll return. But I don't see that happening." Another respondent (#64) would consider leaving Canada only if he were unable to even barely survive in the country and even then, "I'm not sure I'd return to Singapore. I might look elsewhere." This respondent, however, was in the minority.

Conditions for Return

The majority (66%) of the Canadian respondents either refused to discuss the conditions under which they were personally likely to return or said that there were none (see Table 10). A smaller proportion (54%) also responded similarly when asked about the conditions for other Singaporeans to return to Singapore. Among those who would discuss the topic, the two main conditions were for financial reasons (26%) and if there were changes in the socio-economic and political environment in Singapore, such as an easing of the pressure to excel (i.e. when people are given the

freedom to choose whether or not to excel) and when "the government shows proof that repression will end" and there will be freedom of expression and choice (14%). According to one respondent (#53), however, "I don't think the conditions (under which Singaporeans would want to return) are feasible -- such as less pressure on their children to excel in school and out of school ... [because] to survive in Singapore, these appear to be prerequisites." He continued further that "most of those I've met appear to live comfortably on much less money than they ever could in Singapore." Unlike the Australian respondents, the Canadian respondents felt that their children were unlikely to want to return, and they would also not encourage them to do so.

The attitude of the Australian respondents is perhaps best summarized by the following statement: "If Singapore has something better, for example, the education is not so pressurizing, there are job opportunities for the children, and certain policies are relaxed and changed for the better" (#3). According to another respondent (#23), "[I]f people are not forced to give up their citizenship as a result of policies in Singapore such as CPF withdrawal and rigid National Service call-up, then the young skilled workers and professionals who don't want to stay on (in Australia) or are unhappy here will go back. Also, the foreign-educated, qualified children of migrants may go back and contribute -- if National Service is easier and shorter, more children may want to go back and serve and maybe even stay there." As mentioned, a number of the respondents indicated that their children (especially daughters) had, on their own volition, expressed a desire to return to Singapore for employment after completion of their tertiary education overseas. Children, however, could also act as a deterrent to return as some parents feared that their children, having grown up in a different environment, would resist the move or that it would be difficult for them to

uproot and re-settle in Singapore. For two female respondents, difficulties in obtaining residency for their non-Singaporean spouses (a Chinese Malaysian copyright manager and a Chinese New Zealander pharmacist) and children had prevented their return.

Perhaps the most insightful analysis of the likelihood of Singaporeans to return was provided by one respondent (#8) thus: "Those who left in the 1950s and 1960s, mainly the Eurasians, were a disgusted lot. There is no hope for their return. For the 1970s group, they were not so anti-Singapore and may go back. Maybe they were fed up with the lifestyle, Singapore style. In the 1980s, those who left may be divided into three groups. The majority left for their children -- competition, worry about the future, the rat race, the life-style (cars, house). These are likely to return if their children's future is certain in Singapore as they are still yearning to be back (emphasis added). Another group in the 1980s left because of restrictions. These are doubtful to go back because they left for personal, individual reasons and they may only visit. A third group in the 1980s left for retirement. These will probably stay on because of the quiet lifestyle. Singapore's is a case of a small country having done so well that its people look outward. It is the 'tragedy of success' story."

A single, male respondent (#41) who did not anticipate returning "at least not at the moment" provided the reasons for not doing so: "(B)ecause there are so many alternatives, so many choices in Australia. Career-wise, the scope is so much wider too. The market is so much bigger than in Singapore." He had earlier not intended to migrate but in the process of a company transfer to Australia, found that the opportunities were much greater there and decided to stay. Perhaps when Singapore has overcome the limitations of its physical geography, it can expect to bring back its ambitious and talented young, like this respondent.

Attachment to Singapore

The Canadian respondents' negative response towards returning to Singapore is again reflected in Table 11 which shows the extent of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements reflecting attachment to Singapore. As to be expected, the Canadian respondents strongly supported the statement on "no intention to return for staying permanently" although they were also likely to agree with the statements that they wanted to return for holidays and that they missed Singapore occasionally. They were also negative on all the remaining items which pointed to a more or less permanent return to Singapore and to the item on retaining their Singapore citizenship. In contrast, the Australian respondents showed a strong preference to hold on to their Singapore citizenship and were neutral with regards to the items indicating more or less permanent returns. Both groups, however, would not admit regret over their decision to emigrate.

As the responses to the questions on personal desires to return to Singapore may be affected by the desire to "save face" and unwillingness to admit regret over the decision to emigrate, respondents were also asked to rate how the other Singaporeans they knew felt on each of the same dimensions. The results show a tendency to rate other Singaporeans as more likely to want to return (Table 12). This differential may be due to the selection into the sample of the better adjusted emigrants or, more likely, a greater willingness to admit problems encountered by others.

Contacts with Singapore

In spite of their negative attitude towards returning home, the Canadian respondents continued to maintain a high level of personal contacts with Singapore and other Singaporeans (Table 13). More than half of the respondents in both countries had Overseas Singaporean friends and relatives whom they contacted several times a month, and nearly 70% had family members or relatives in Singapore with whom they were in contact at least occasionally. There was, however, much less contact with formal institutions.

About half of the Australian respondents and 42% of the Canadian respondents received news from Singapore "very often." In spite of this, there was a strong desire among the Australian respondents for more information on Singapore, as will be shown in the next section. This show of interest augurs well for the government's effort at cultivating ties with the Overseas Singaporeans in Australia.

Given their attitudes towards Singapore, what are the prospects for linkages between Singapore and the overseas communities? For those who do not plan to return, what are the prospects for securing their co-operation in Singapore's development strategy and in what ways can the government further improve ties with the overseas communities? These questions are examined in the sub-sections that follow.

Prospect for Linkages Between Singapore and the Overseas Communities

The prospect is good for Singapore to develop a mutually beneficial relationship, at least with its overseas community in Australia. When asked how the government and other agencies in Singapore can help Overseas Singaporeans, only 4% of the Australia respondents (2 persons) replied that there was no way or that they

did not want to be helped as compared to 30% of the Canadian respondents (Table 14). The Australian respondents were also interested in obtaining more information on developments in Singapore whereas the Canadian respondents would prefer help to settle into their adoptive country. Other suggestions on the ways in which Singapore could help the Overseas Singaporeans included the establishment of more High Commissions, Embassies or at least consular offices; more effort by the High Commissions or Embassies to keep in touch with Singaporeans living overseas; facilitation in the procedural aspects such as passport renewals and exit permit extensions; and the establishment and improvement of trade organizations or offices.

On their part, the respondents saw the contributions of Overseas Singaporeans as that of sharing their skills and experiences with those at home (although not without some sarcasm on the part of the Canadian respondents), acting as bridges for trade links between their adopted country and Singapore, and acting as goodwill ambassadors for Singapore (Table 15). Only 6 respondents, all from Canada, were non-committal or negative about the role of Overseas Singaporeans in helping Singapore.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As discussed in the introductory section, the Singapore government is interested in the reasons for emigration as it wants to identify measures to retain as many Singaporeans as possible. At the same time, it would also like to incorporate those who are already overseas into its strategy for Singapore's future growth and development. This final section presents some policy recommendations on these dual concerns of the government.

The findings of this study show consistent differences between the Australian and Canadian respondents with regard to their reasons for emigration and the degree of attachment to Singapore and things Singaporean and suggest that the policy options available, and indeed whether there are any options available at all, differ by the locations of the overseas Singaporean communities. Distance is likely to be an important intervening variable in the explanation of the differences between the two groups, which are actually self-selected by location. According to the "gravity-distance" models of migration, a nearer destination would have been preferred over a further one if similar goals can be satisfied at either location as migration is costly both financially and in terms of effort (Bogue, 1969). The fact that the Canadian respondents have chosen the further destination over a nearer one suggests that there are likely to be stronger attractions there, which would render them less likely to return.

Measures to retain Singaporeans

In order to minimize the level of emigration, the government has already announced that it would improve the quality of life in Singapore, within the constraints

of its size and physical environment. This is in response to the oft-cited reason that Singaporeans emigrate for a better quality of life. Some specific measures that can be used in this regard are discussed below.

Education Quality and Opportunities

This study's findings on the reasons for emigration show the important contribution of concern with children's education to emigration from Singapore, at least among those who emigrated to Australia (section II). Regardless of whether the emphasis given to this problem by the respondents in the study is justified or whether it is a cover for other dissatisfaction and reasons for disaffection, some weight ought to be given to this subject in the consideration of measures to retain as many Singaporeans as possible. The rational basis for emigration to Australia for the sake of the children's education has already been demonstrated in section II. The limited number of university places in Singapore is likely to affect emigration in other ways: the overseas education provides not only the entry qualifications required under the new migration schemes but also the "additional social knowledge and information relevant to migration" (Inglis and Wu, forthcoming, p.25).

The government's effort to increase the number of university places in Singapore, following the Dainton report, is a step in the right direction. At the lower grade levels, the implementation of independent as well as single session schools is likely to cater to the desire both for the inclusion of more non-academic subjects in the curriculum for a more rounded education and for opportunities for creative thinking, as the Senior Minister of State for Education, Dr Tay Eng Soon, has pointed out (The Straits Times 30 September 1990).

As regards the bilingual policy, the government should perhaps re-evaluate the necessity of requiring all students to obtain at least a pass grade in their mother tongue for admission into the university. If the rationale for the bilingual policy is only to provide "cultural ballast," then there is perhaps no necessity to even making it an examinable subject since this will only encourage the treatment of the second language as "a language to be studied on the route to remunerative employment ... but never quite offering a basis for the moral and the good life" (Sandhu and Wheatley, 1989 p. 1100). The sometimes tragic stories of those otherwise "good" students who could not cope with the learning of the mother tongue need not be repeated here. Perhaps it is time to re-examine the bilingual policy, with regard not to its desirability but to its place in the curriculum, the way it is taught in our schools and other possible unintended consequences. In this regard, the government should evaluate even more carefully the desirability of the proposal to have ethnic Chinese primary school pupils study Chinese at the first language level (CL1) before switching to English at the secondary level (see The Straits Times 28 September 1990). One of the consequences of utilizing this method to retain our "Asianness" may well be increased emigration -- by parents whose children cannot cope with Chinese, those who feel that their children's competitiveness in the marketplace will be threatened by the lack of a strong English education and the minorities who feel threatened by the potential surge in Chinese chauvinism.

Overcoming Smallness

The scope for changing the other aspects of the Singapore environment is perhaps more restricted. As one respondent (#41) noted, "Singapore is very limited

physically. Like the climate, the lack of space – you cannot do anything about it." Globalization is one way by which the government hopes to overcome the size problem. The respondent, however, had an interesting suggestion to add, viz. the government can buy a piece of land elsewhere (in New Zealand or Australia, for example), turn it into a massive resort or playground for Singaporeans and fly people there on special holiday packages at heavily subsidized rates. He continued that the aim should not be profit making but to provide people with physical alternatives and Singapore could well absorb the costs, "a small price to pay if it helps to make people happy and make them want to stay in Singapore."

Style of Government

While the definition of the situation may differ between the government and some segment of the population on the threats that Singapore faces, and thus the difference in opinions on the need to be vigilant, it is perhaps the government's duty to err on the side of caution. A more open government, however, could erase the credibility gap between the government and the people. A 1989 Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) study showed that some 44% of the Singaporeans aged 15 and older who were interviewed may be said to be alienated because they perceived that citizens were not being consulted on important national matters to the extent that they felt they should be (Chiew, 1990, p. 72). The same study also showed that those who were "alienated" were more likely to have considered emigrating. According to Quah (1990, p. 95), a consultative style is conducive to the promotion of the core value on solving problems by consensus instead of contention; however, the government must also be seen to be serious and not merely paying lip service to the consultative style of

government. In the view of one respondent (#10), it is very important that citizens be treated at their level of maturity, otherwise there will be an outflow. According to another respondent (#44), Singapore has progressed to a state where it can afford to relax and be more magnanimous towards people; the restrictive style of government was right when the nation was young and just developing but if the style of government does not change now, it is going to lead to a lot of dissatisfied young people who are not able to tolerate the old style. He continued, "... the country is ready now, mature enough to handle a more open, relaxed government style. Goh Chok Tong appears to be moving in the right direction and that is good -- it augurs well for the nation."

Quality of Society

The system of meritocracy promoted by the government has been blamed for the extreme pressure to excel, competitiveness and individualism. In response, the government has maintained that competition is necessary for the country's continued survival. Granted that this is the case, perhaps it can be made more pleasant by inculcating in the people a kinder, more charitable attitude, particularly towards those who tried but failed as well as the less fortunate. Mr Goh Chok Tong's call for a more caring society, when implemented, may also alleviate some of the dissatisfaction felt with living in Singapore. The Overseas Singaporeans studied were full of praise for the grace and compassion shown in the Australian and Canadian societies. ~~Cre~~ than at the inter-personal level, another aspect of the move towards the more gracious society could be in the relationship between the civil servants as representatives of the government and the public. In this study, a number of respondents had raised issues

on the handling of the public by civil servants. Although some of these may just be rationalizations, and not justification enough for emigration, they could have contributed to the dissatisfaction that some people feel with life in Singapore. More commonly, the plea is for the government (and civil servants) to explain policies so that they are more transparent and the people are better able to understand them. Even if service was sometimes said to be slow and inefficient, Australian bureaucrats were described as friendly and helpful, and they took time to explain. According to one respondent (#15), when the rationale for policies are explained to the people, they are more likely to accept it. It is heartening that the Singapore Civil Service has begun to take steps to improve the quality of service of its counter staff (The Straits Times 6 October 1990). As the Director of the Civil Service Institute, Ms Teo Hee Lian, correctly pointed out, "there will be situations in which staff need to implement policies strictly, but even or especially in these circumstances, counter staff have to strive to serve the public in a polite manner" (ibid.). Civil servants, being perceived as representatives of the government, have an important role to play in conveying the correct image of the government and its intentions. An emigrant (not in the sample) who wrote to the Forum page of The Straits Times (6 February 1990) about the Passport Office's refusal to extend his son's passport, for example, had this to say: "While the officials I have spoken to have been civil, they have been unable to give me a satisfactory explanation for this decision. ... I find this hard to reconcile with the statements of senior government leaders like Mr Goh Chok Tong about keeping Singapore's doors open to Singaporean emigres and Mr Mah Bow Tan's overtures to Singaporean immigrants to Australia."

Perhaps, as Ambassador Chan Heng Chee, Singapore's most recent Permanent Representative to the United Nations, has pointed out, it is also time for the government to re-examine its priorities and remove those rules and regulations that are not essential. Excessive regulation and inflexible implementation could result in the loss of talent from Singapore as these people are resourceful and may find other countries that are willing to accept them without much ado.

It may also be pointed out that a number of existing policies have the unintended consequences of causing Singapore to lose its citizens, and sometimes two generations of Singaporeans at once. Among these are the policies on citizenship, National Service and the withdrawal of CPF savings. As mentioned, some respondents renounced their Singapore citizenship in order to withdraw on their CPF savings for use and investment in their new country. Some also reported that their friends have even risked being stateless in doing so, sadly because of rumours. Under present requirements also, emigrants who renounce their Singapore citizenship are required to undertake that their sons will also do so upon attaining age 21 (unless a bond amounting to S\$75,000 or more is furnished for each son to ensure their return for National Service). Similarly, because call-up for National Service occurs before they can legally renounce their citizenship on their own, parents whose sons are unwilling or not ready to serve at the time of call-up will have to sacrifice their own citizenship in order to "sponsor" latter. In other instances, when the parents are unable or unwilling to furnish National Service bonds for their sons, their only alternative is to renounce their citizenship. In all these instances, not one but two generations of Singaporeans are lost to Singapore.

Judging by the responses, there are various reasons for reluctance to undergo National Service. In certain cases, it may be because the parents and perhaps, the young men themselves, were unwilling to put their lives "on hold" for the 2-3 years service duration and would rather be allowed to complete their education before serving. Some parents were also faced with a dilemma because their sons, not having grown up in an environment where National Service is the norm, preferred not to serve. The unhappy encounters of perhaps one or two ex-servicemen could also have influenced attitudes towards National Service. Perhaps even more than their concern with political freedom, Singaporeans are pragmatic about their possessions and their children's future. If forced to choose between their citizenship on the one hand, and having their CPF savings at hand or the opportunity to not disrupt their children's education on the other, the choice may often be to give up Singapore citizenship.

Obviously, the solution is not to abandon these policies in order to accommodate the few who have emigrated for whatever reasons. Perhaps time and distance have diluted the sense of urgency among some Overseas Singaporeans on the need for such policies. The government has recently reiterated to Singaporeans its reasons for not changing the current National Service policies. Perhaps this message should also be communicated, and reinforced, to Singaporeans living overseas.

As mentioned in section VI, there were some Overseas Singaporeans in the sample (particularly the Australian respondents) who held a "wait-and-see" attitude regarding their future citizenship status. They also rank among those Overseas Singaporeans who continue to speak fondly of Singapore (cf The Sunday Times 22 April 1990). Since Singapore does not provide for dual citizenship, Singaporeans who

have given up their Singapore citizenship are likely to remain overseas permanently. Hence it would be ideal to minimize the likelihood of Singaporeans desiring to renounce their citizenship, even if they are currently living abroad.

A Caution

The comments on Singapore, Australia and Canada by the Overseas Singaporeans reported above reflect the new aspirations of Singaporeans whose basic needs have been satisfied by the government's economic success. This is the "paradox of affluence" (Rieger, 1989). The measures suggested above are likely to enhance Singapore's attractiveness to Singaporeans. On the other hand, the government should also not set for itself the target of 100% retention of Singaporeans in the country, for as one respondent (#8) pointed out, "Singapore's is a case of a small country having done so well that people look outward -- it is a 'tragedy of success story.'" It was his view that Singaporeans by and large accept that being a small country, Singapore must be disciplined and regimented but there will still be some who want to leave. In this respondent's opinion, it will be difficult to further improve Singapore to satisfy everybody. Perhaps also, Singapore's sense of urgency to deal with the outflow is amplified by the fact that it is a city-state. The following comment by a Singaporean emigrant in Canada (not in the sample) is perhaps especially perceptive: the distance between Sydney and Singapore is about the same as that between Vancouver and Toronto in Canada; there is a continual movement of people between these Canadian cities, but there is much less concern about it there than here in Singapore because it is a city state.

Measures to incorporate Overseas Singaporeans in development

There are basically two types of strategies that have been suggested for the incorporation of Overseas Singaporeans in the country's future development. The first is to encourage Singaporeans to return home, as has been adopted by two other Asian Newly Industrializing Economies, South Korea and Taiwan. A more recent perspective sees the overseas communities as a resource rather than a loss to the country of origin in view of their potential contribution to the country's globalization strategy. The Singapore International concept is a reflection of the second perspective. However, the findings of this study suggest that both strategies are more likely to be accepted in Australia than in Canada.

Strategies to bring Overseas Singaporeans home

Some of the specific measures that have been suggested in this regard by Singapore politicians include provision for dual citizenship and increasing the availability of boarding facilities for the children of Overseas Singaporeans to return for studies. Public opinion in Singapore appears divided on the dual citizenship issue (The Straits Times 2 February 1990). Those who are against the idea consider it "unfair" to those who have stayed behind. The usual question raised concerns the value of loyalty.

Besides being the hallmark of a kinder, more gracious society, however, there is also good economic reason to make it easy for those who wish to return to do so as they may bring back with them skills and capital. At a time when Singapore is throwing its doors wide open to outsiders (particularly Hongkongers), why not give priority to its own former citizens, who share the same cultural roots, to return?

Admittedly, dual citizenship potentially raises legal complications such as jurisdiction over criminal behaviour by those who hold dual citizenship. More importantly, there may be a conflict of loyalties should there be conflicts between Singapore and their adopted country, and the nation's leaders will not be sure of their stand when the chips are down. Instead of a policy providing for dual citizenship, it is suggested that priority over other foreigners be given to former citizens who want to return to Singapore. This is the system currently adopted in Japan for its emigrants and their descendants (*nikkei*) who wish to return to the old country (Far Eastern Economic Review 27 September 1990).

This study also show that a number of the younger adult children in Australia who have either completed or are nearing completion of tertiary education have shown an interest in returning to Singapore for employment. For the boys, however, there are some parents who are unsure about their sons' status in Singapore and fear that they may be "nabbed" on their arrival at the airport, a thought that is as abhorrent to the Overseas Singaporeans as it is to other Asians. Part of the apprehension arises out of uncertainty due to lack of accurate information (see below). To minimize such instances where fear has prevented young Singaporeans from returning, the policy on this could be made clear. Singapore's overseas missions could also play a more active communicating role. More of the young Overseas Singaporeans may be encouraged to return if more information on employment opportunities are made available to them. However, this does not mean that the country should bend over backwards to bring home those who want to "have their cake and eat it," viz. enjoy the privileges of citizenship but not to fulfill their obligations.

In his 1990 National Day Rally speech, former Prime Minister Mr Lee Kuan Yew urged the second generation leaders to look into the possibility of revising the existing citizenship laws regarding permanent residence for the foreign-born spouses and children of Singapore women. This is a step in the right direction if Singapore's goal is to retain as many of its citizens as possible, for, as the former Prime Minister himself pointed out, not just one but two generations will be lost to Singapore if Singaporean women married to foreigners cannot secure permanent residence for their spouse and children. Indeed, this was the sad experience of two Singaporean women in the Australian sample and for these women, any change at this point in time is already "too little too late" as they anticipate problems in uprooting their children.

A third group that should be nurtured and encouraged to return to Singapore are the Singapore students who are pursuing their education overseas. One respondent (#41) who described emigrants as being "already lost" to Singapore, suggested that the government should target its effort at the Singaporean students overseas who are "at an age when they are very malleable" and deciding where to make their home. He said, "Look after them, let them feel the warmth of the Singaporean authorities and they will remember. Ignore them and they will also remember."

Establishing ties with Overseas Singaporeans

The establishment of Singapore clubs overseas is one step in the direction of creating an *esprit de corps* and a renewal of interest in the country. Other steps that can be taken to improve ties with Overseas Singaporeans, are as follows:

i) Filling the lacuna in information: As shown in section VI, there was a strong desire among at least some of the Overseas Singaporeans for information on Singapore. This was particularly true of respondents in Australia. Except for a few sensational items, there are few reports on Singapore in the newspaper and television media. A few of the respondents rely on copies of The Straits Times brought in by Singapore Airlines (SIA) crew members, the more energetic ones may even go to the libraries while others receive their information from the occasional visitor. The desirability of providing ready access to accurate information is demonstrated by the fact that some of the respondents (and some other Overseas Singaporeans known to them) have renounced their Singapore citizenship based on rumours about possible new regulations to arrest the outflow of CPF savings. In addition, there appears to be some confusion, fear and anxiety among some Overseas Singaporeans regarding National Service policies, attributable in part to faulty information. In Perth, in particular, several of the survey respondents complained about the difficulty of access to the Singapore High Commission, which would have been a reliable source except that it is inconveniently located on the other side of the sub-continent in Canberra. There were also concerns about the cost of long distance calls, especially when multiple calls often had to be made in order to reach the relevant officers, and inconvenience due to the different time zones between Perth and Canberra.

Among the measures suggested by the respondents to increase the flow of information were the initiation of a newsletter and increasing accessibility to the newspapers, such as by making them available free of charge and placing them in the clubhouses set up specifically for Singaporeans to socialize. Singapore organizations such as the Singapore Airlines (SIA), Singapore Tourist Promotion Board (STPB) and

the Trade Development Board (TDB) which have offices in overseas locations with large Overseas Singaporean communities could also make themselves better known to the residents, not only for the services that they offer but also as a channel of information on Singapore (only too few of the respondents knew about the existence of the STPB and TDB offices in Sydney, for example). The contents of the publications should be informative and not propagandistic, or perceived not to be so (the Mirror magazine is cited as an example of a propagandistic publication).

ii) Increasing Consular Facilities: Besides providing a convenient location for passport renewals, extensions of exit permits and similar procedural matters, the consular offices could also serve as an information source and a gathering place for Singaporeans who are living overseas. The demand for more consular facilities is likely to increase in the future as the "Singapore International" concept takes root and more and more Singaporeans go overseas to work or set up business. The costs of maintaining these consular offices, which need not be very high to begin with, will be justified if more Singaporeans living overseas are encouraged to retain their Singapore citizenship as a result (or not to give it up out of frustration).

Adopting the Subtle Approach

Finally, it is suggested that subtlety be adopted in Singapore's approach to the Overseas Singaporeans. This would reduce the suspicion which some Overseas Singaporeans hold towards the government's initiatives. While the government may want to proclaim loudly that it cares about all Singaporeans in order to stem emigration, an over-eager or "hard-sell" approach to Overseas Singaporean may be counter-productive. It should also not make those who have chosen to stay feel less

privileged by, for example, offering financial incentives or better positions to returnees (Lee Yuan, personal communication, 1991). On a more optimistic note, there are recent reports that overseas Thais and Japanese (some having lived in a foreign land for generations) have been drawn back by economic prosperity in their motherland (Bangkok Post 9 September 1990). As Singapore continues to prosper and the quality of life improves, it may one day also draw some Overseas Singaporeans to return.

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Table 1 Selected Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents

(percent)

	Austra- lia	Canada	Total
Total	100 (50)*	100 (50)	100 (100)
Ethnic Group:			
Chinese	80	74	77
Malay	10	-	5
Indian	6	24	15
Others	2	2	2
Unknown	2	-	1
Sex:			
Male	76	78	77
Female	24	22	23
Marital Status:			
Single	6	12	9
Married	92	84	88
Divorced	2	2	2
Widowed	-	2	1
Age:			
Below 35	6	20	13
35-39	16	22	19
40-44	40	32	36
45 and older	36	22	29
Unknown	2	4	3
Mean	43.0	39.9	41.5

	Austra- lia	Canada	Total
Table 1 (contd.)			
Education:			
PSLE**	2	-	1
O Levels	16	6	11
A Levels/Diploma	24	12	18
Degree	56	80	68
Unknown	2	2	2

Note:

* Figures in parentheses in this and all subsequent tables denote number of respondents.

** Respondent has Malaysian LCE qualifications.

Table 2 Selected Migration Characteristics of Respondents

(percent)

	Austra- -lia	Canada	Total
Total	100 (50)	100 (50)	100 (100)
Year of Departure:			
1960-1969	10	4	7
1970-1979	24	16	20
1980-1989	66	80*	73*
1980-1984	18	14	16
1985-1989	48	66*	57*
Age at departure:			
Below 20	4	2	3
20 - 24	14	6	10
25 - 29	10	16	13
30 - 34	22	32	27
35 - 39	24	18	21
40 and over	24	22	23
Mean	34.2	33.7	34.0
Lived elsewhere since leaving Singapore:			
	8	16	12
Visa at arrival:			
Permanent Resident	88	96	92
Student	4	4	4
Employment	6	-	3
Other	2	-	1

	Austra -lia	Canada	Total
Table 2 (contd.)			
Family migration:			
Accompanied by family members or relatives at arrival:	68	82	75
Joined by family members or relatives after arrival:	52	44	48
Current citizenship/ residential status:			
Citizen	46	50	48
Permanent resident	52	50	51
Neither	2	-	1
Place of Birth:			
Singapore	74	88	81
Malaysia	18	12	15
Others	6	-	3
Unknown	2	-	1

Note:

* Including three who left in 1990.

Table 3 Reasons for Emigration

(percent)

	Austra- lia	Canada
Total	100 (50)	100 (50)
Push Factors		
Socio-economic and political environment	22	38
Physical environment	8	-
Country's future security	8	2
Children's education	34	2
National Service policies	8	-
Personal frustrations	24	4
Bureaucratic reasons	4	-
Family members no longer around	-	2
Pull Factors		
Socio-economic and political environment	12	34
Physical environment	6	4
Educational opportunities	12	2
Economic opportunities*	20	32
Familiarity with country/region	4	6
Ease of obtaining visa/citizenship	8	4
Country's future security	-	4
Presence of family members	-	10
Others		
Followed non-Singaporean spouse	6	2
Followed Singaporean spouse	2	-
Personality	6	2
Others	4	4

Note: Percentages may not sum up to 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 4 Reasons for Choosing Australia or Canada

(percent)

	Austra- lia	Canada
Total	100 (50)	100 (50)
Spouse is Australian/Canadian citizen	8	2
Familiarity with country	12	18
Family's/friends' influence	4	12
Presence of family/friends	10	24
Education/training opportunities	8	4
Job/business opportunities	20	24
Proximity to Singapore	38	-
Proximity to US	-	10
Ease of obtaining visa/citizenship	6	10
Climate/environment	26	18
Others	-	6

Note: Percentages may not sum up to 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 5A Importance of Values to Respondents

(Mean Scores)

Values	Australia	Canada
Having a peaceful life	2.72 (5)	3.00 (1)
Living in a healthful environment	2.78 (3)	3.00 (1)
Having comfortable housing	2.74 (4)	2.88 (4)
Having a job that is not too strenuous	1.87(15)	2.02 (9)
Having good opportunities for education for self and children	2.92 (1)	3.00 (1)
Having a prestigious job	1.76(17)	1.06(15)
Being looked up to in the community	1.94(14)	1.28(14)
Saving money	2.46 (8)	2.60 (7)
Having a regular stable income	2.72 (5)	2.64 (6)
Having economic security for old age	2.60 (7)	2.78 (5)
Having a high income	2.16(11)	1.34(13)
Having a high standard of living	2.26(10)	1.58(11)
Having people to rely on in times of need	2.28 (9)	2.78 (5)
Living in a familiar environment	1.82(16)	1.66(10)
Living near friends and relatives	1.76(17)	1.56(12)
Having a feeling of belonging in the community	2.10(13)	2.64 (6)
Living in a community that is a good place to raise children	2.82 (2)	2.98 (2)
Having freedom to do what you want to do	2.64 (6)	2.96 (3)
Being able to meet a variety of people	2.12(12)	2.44 (8)
Having a variety of entertainment available	1.62(18)	2.60 (7)

Notes:

- a) The importance of each goal or value to the respondent is scored as follows: Very important = 3; Fairly important = 2; and Not important = 1.
- b) The figures in parentheses in columns 2 and 3 indicate the rank of the mean scores.

Table 5B Australian Respondents' Rating of Likelihood to Attain Values in Australia and in Singapore
(Mean Scores)

Values	Australia	Singapore	Difference
Having a peaceful life*	2.72	1.90	+0.82
Living in a healthful environment*	2.80	1.96	+0.84
Having comfortable housing*	2.88	1.98	+0.90
Having a job that is not too strenuous	2.46	1.74	+0.72
Having good opportunities for education for self and children*	2.94	1.80	+1.14
Having a prestigious job	2.07	2.42	-0.35
Being looked up to in the community	2.11	2.36	-0.25
Saving money*	2.26	2.18	+0.08
Having a regular stable income*	2.47	2.54	-0.07
Having economic security for old age*	2.69	2.20	+0.49
Having a high income*	2.23	2.49	-0.26
Having a high standard of living*	2.55	2.40	+0.15
Having people to rely on in times of need*	2.00	2.65	-0.65
Living in a familiar environment	2.11	2.72	-0.61
Living near friends and relatives	1.85	2.60	-0.75
Having a feeling of belonging in the community*	2.10	2.55	-0.45
Living in a community that is a good place to raise children*	2.67	2.13	+0.54
Having freedom to do what you want to do*	2.92	1.59	+1.33
Being able to meet a variety of people*	2.54	2.36	+0.18
Having a variety of entertainment available	2.22	2.37	-0.15

Notes:

- a) The likelihood of attaining each goal is scored as follows: High = 3; Medium = 2; Low = 1. Values with mean scores of 2-3 (fairly to very important) in Table 5A are asterisked.
- b) Column 3 is obtained by subtracting column 2 from column 1. A positive score indicates that the respondents are better off in Australia than in Singapore, and a negative score that they would have been better off in Singapore.

Table 5C Canadian Respondents' Rating on Likelihood to Attain Values in Canada and in Singapore
(Mean Scores)

Values	Canada	Singapore	Difference
Having a peaceful life*	2.94	1.90	+1.04
Living in a healthful environment*	3.00	1.90	+1.10
Having comfortable housing*	2.96	2.43	+0.53
Having a job that is not too strenuous*	2.86	1.00	+1.86
Having good opportunities for education for self and children*	3.00	1.40	+1.60
Having a prestigious job	2.62	2.43	+0.19
Being looked up to in the community	2.64	1.97	+0.67
Saving money*	2.73	2.65	+0.08
Having a regular stable income*	2.86	2.81	+0.05
Having economic security for old age*	2.78	2.94	-0.16
Having a high income	2.63	2.51	+0.12
Having a high standard of living	2.81	2.33	+0.48
Having people to rely on in times of need*	2.88	2.77	+0.11
Living in a familiar environment	2.60	2.86	-0.26
Living near friends and relatives	2.64	3.00	-0.36
Having a feeling of belonging in the community*	2.87	1.94	+0.93
Living in a community that is a good place to raise children*	3.00	1.38	+1.62
Having freedom to do what you want to do*	2.98	1.19	+1.79
Being able to meet a variety of people*	3.00	1.70	+1.30
Having a variety of entertainment available*	3.00	1.15	+1.85

Notes:

- a) The likelihood of obtaining each goal is scored as follows: High = 3; Medium = 2; Low = 1. Values with mean scores of 2-3 (fairly to very important) in Table 5A are asterisked.
- b) Column 3 is obtained by subtracting column 2 from column 1. A positive score indicates that the respondents are better off in Canada than in Singapore, and a negative score that they would have been better off in Singapore.

Table 6 Economic Adjustment in Overseas Communities

(percent)

	Australia	Canada
Total	100 (50)	100 (50)
Occupation in Singapore:		
Legislators, Administrators and Managers	32	14
Professionals	28	38
Technicians and Associate Professionals	4	34
Clerical Workers	10	2
Service Workers and Shop, Market and Related Sales Workers	4	-
Not working	22	12
Occupation at arrival:		
Legislators, Administrators and Managers	30	14
Professionals	22	10
Technicians and Associate Professionals	12	18
Clerical Workers	10	8
Service Workers and Shop, Market and Related Sales Workers	4	14
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	-	2
Cleaners, Labourers and Related Workers	-	2
Not working	22	32
Current occupation:		
Legislators, Administrators and Managers	52	24
Professionals	16	26
Technicians and Associate Professionals	6	24
Clerical Workers	8	4
Service Workers and Shop, Market and Related Sales Workers	2	16
Not working	16	6

	Australia	Canada
Table 6 (contd.)		
Current Household Income (S\$):		
Less than 45,000	18	14
45,001 - 95,000	40	40
95,001 - 145,000	14	18
145,001 and over	18	14
Not applicable/refused	10	14
Median	78,000	86,667
Rating of current income vs income expected in Singapore		
Higher	36	36
The same	20	22
Lower	34	38
Don't know/unable to compare/no answer	10	4
Rating of current ability to save vs ability to save in Singapore		
More	46	46
Same/Less	30	44
Don't know/unable to compare/no answer	24	5
Current vs expected living standard in Singapore		
Higher	46	22
The same	24	70
Lower	20	6
Don't know/unable to compare/no answer	10	2

	Austra- lia	Canada
Table 6 (contd.)		
Current vs standard of living at departure from Singapore		
Higher	60	28
The same	16	64
Lower	12	6
Don't know/unable to compare/no answer	12	2
Standard of living vs average local family		
Higher	82	74
The same	16	26
Don't know/no answer	2	-

Table 7 Social Adjustment in Overseas Communities (in percent)

	Australia	Canada
Total	100 (50)	100 (50)
Friendship Networks:*		
Percent of friends who are locals		
Less than 50%	62	56
50% or more	32	44
Percent of friends who are Singaporeans or ex-Singaporeans		
Less than 50%	52	84
50% or more	38	14
Percent of friends who are other immigrants or foreigners		
Less than 50%	54	96
50% or more	16	-
Membership in at least one organization:		
Local	52	28
Communal	78	10

Note:

- * The sum of the cells may not equal 100 as some respondents could not give numerical answers while others either lumped all non-Singaporeans together or Singaporeans and other Asians together.

Table 8 Perception of Discrimination

	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	NA	Mean Score
Australia:							
At restaurants, I feel I am treated as well as White customers	30	60	4	6	-	-	4.14
In the shops, I feel I am treated in the same way as Whites	30	56	8	6	-	-	4.10
At school, my children feel they are treated in the same way as White children	24	44	2	8	-	22	4.08
I feel I will be promoted in my job like my White colleagues	14	18	-	16	6	46	3.33
Canada:							
At restaurants, I feel I am treated as well as White customers	70	28	-	2	-	-	4.66
In the shops, I feel I am treated in the same way as Whites	70	28	-	2	-	-	4.66
At school, my children feel they are treated in the same way as White children	50	18	2	-	-	30	4.69
I feel I will be promoted in my job like my White colleagues	56	20	-	-	-	24	4.74

Notes:

1. SA = Strongly agree ; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; and NA = Not Applicable (respondents who feel unqualified to comment since they have no experience in the area).
2. Figures in parentheses indicate the scores assigned to the response categories. "NA" responses are excluded from the computation of mean scores.

Table 9 Political Adjustment in Overseas Communities

(percent)

	Australia	Canada
Total	100 (50)	100 (50)
Citizen of current country:		
Yes	46	50
No	54	50
Plan to apply for citizenship in the future	10	42
No plan to apply for citizenship	16	-
Undecided	28	8
Participated in voting:		
Yes	38	30
No	62	70
Reason for not voting:		
Not interested	6	-
Not eligible	48	64
No need to	6	2
Others	2	4
Spoken publicly on social or political issues:		
Yes	20	24
No	80	76
Reason for not speaking out:		
Not interested	32	2
No need to	18	38
Don't feel that I should	4	14
Others	26	22

Table 10 Opinions on Returning to Singapore (in percent)

	Austra- lia	Canada
Total	100 (50)	100 (50)
Whether respondent or family members want to return to Singapore:		
Yes	18	-
No	28	92
Maybe/depends	46	8
Don't know	8	-
Conditions for returning home: self*		
Unable to adjust to lifestyle or weather	2	2
Troubles in present country	10	-
Financial reasons	-	8
If family members leave or are no longer here	6	-
Changes in socio-economic or political environment in Singapore	20	6
Better economic opportunities in Singapore	24	4
Changes in the education system	12	4
Easier immigration/citizenship policy	8	-
If able to maintain same or higher standard of living	6	-
Familial reasons	6	2
Others	4	4
Only for visits	6	8
Only for short-term or expatriate employment	6	2
Others	14	-
Don't know/no comments/no conditions	10	74

	Austra- lia	Canada
Table 10 (contd.)		
Conditions for returning home: others*		
Unable to adjust to lifestyle or weather	6	2
Troubles in present country	12	-
Financial reasons	8	28
If family members leave or are no longer around	2	-
Changes in the socio-economic or political environment in Singapore	18	18
Better economic opportunities in Singapore	18	4
Changes in the education system	16	6
Changes in National Service policies	14	2
Dual citizenship	4	-
Easier immigration/citizenship policies	8	-
If able to maintain same or higher standard of living	-	2
Familial reasons	6	2
Others	-	-
Only for visits	6	2
Others	8	-
Don't know/no comments/no conditions	18	48

* The sum of the percentages may exceed 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 11 Respondent's Attachment to Singapore

(Mean Scores)

	Australia	Canada
Miss Singapore in daily life	2.40	1.90
Miss Singapore once in a while	3.96	3.62
Want to return for holidays	4.40	3.50
Prefer to remain as Singapore citizen	3.33	1.84
Returning after children are educated and independent	2.72	1.74
Returning after job retirement	2.55	1.78
No intention to return for staying permanently	2.96	4.24
Will return if better job offer exists in Singapore	2.89	1.82
Made a hasty decision in leaving Singapore	1.86	1.74
Encourage children to return to Singapore to settle down	2.85	1.93

Note: Strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Neutral = 3;
Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1.

Table 12 Respondent's Perception on Others' Attachment to Singapore

(Mean Scores)

	Australia	Canada
Miss Singapore in daily life	2.66	2.09
Miss Singapore once in a while	4.14	3.77
Want to return for holidays	4.39	3.81
Prefer to remain as Singapore citizen	3.32	2.11
Returning after children are educated and independent	2.73	2.00
Returning after job retirement	2.42	2.04
No intention to return for staying permanently	3.11	3.96
Will return if better job offer exists in Singapore	3.17	2.15
Made a hasty decision in leaving Singapore	2.24	1.98
Encourage children to return to Singapore to settle down	2.59	1.98

Note: Strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Neutral = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1.

Table 13 Contacts with Singapore

(percent)

	Austra- lia	Canada
Total	100 (50)	100 (50)
Frequency of contact with family, relatives and friends from Singapore living in the overseas communities*		
Every day	16	40
Several times a month	52	62
Occasionally	34	54
Frequency of contact with family and relatives in Singapore*		
Every day	4	-
Several times a month	52	66
Occasionally	68	70
Contacts with former institutions		
Place of study	12	-
Place of work	38	12
Others	12	4
Frequency of receiving news from Singapore		
Very often	52	42
Once a month	8	-
Occasionally	36	40
Only when I meet Singaporeans	4	14

* The sum of the percentages does not equal 100 due to multiple responses, e.g. a respondent may contact some relatives several times a month and others only occasionally.

Table 14 Suggestions on Ways Singapore Can Help Overseas Singaporeans

	Austra- lia	Canada
Total	100 (50)	100 (50)
No way/none/don't know	4	30
Set up High Commission/consular office	16	14
Set up/improve office or organizations for trade links	6	12
Provide information on developments in Singapore	48	6
High Commission to keep in touch with Overseas Singaporeans	14	10
Help Overseas Singaporeans settle in	8	22
Facilitate procedural aspects (exit permits and permit extensions, etc.)	12	-
Dual citizenship	4	-
Erase negative image of Overseas Singaporeans	2	-
Others	10	2
Don't know/no comments	14	16

* The sum of the percentages may exceed 100 due to multiple responses.

Table 15 Suggestions on Ways Overseas Singaporeans Can Help Singapore

(percent)

	Australia	Canada
Total	100 (50)	100 (50)
Transfer/share skills and experiences with Singaporeans	8	36
Act as bridge or trade links between present country and Singapore	32	18
Encourage tourism to Singapore	8	4
Buy Singapore products/encourage locals to buy	4	2
Invest in Singapore	4	-
Act as goodwill ambassadors	36	6
Return to Singapore	-	16
Provide feedback to Singapore	8	8
Others	6	6
None/don't know	18	14

Note: The sum of the percentages may exceed 100 due to multiple responses.

A STUDY OF OVERSEAS SINGAPOREANS

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is _____

The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in Singapore is conducting a study of Singaporeans who have left Singapore to settle down in other countries. I have been assigned to do this interview with you.

Your responses will be strictly confidential and your name will not be cited in our paper or revealed to others.

		Serial No.
Name :	_____	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Address :	_____	

Telephone :	_____	
Interviewer :	_____	
Date :	_____	Time started: _____

I. HISTORY

1 I am interested in knowing when you left Singapore and how you came to this country.

i When did you leave Singapore? 19_____.

ii Did you come here directly or did you live elsewhere before coming here?

a. Came directly

b. Lived in other countries (specify):

iii Were you holding an immigrant visa when you came to this country or did you change your visa status after coming here?

a. Had immigrant visa at arrival

b. Converted from _____ visa

iv When you came to this country, did you come alone or did your family members come with you? If you came with your family, can you please tell me who came with you, and their ages and occupations at that time?

a. Came alone

b. Came with family

[Interviewer: Enter answers in table below]

Relationship to Respondent	Age at departure	Occupation in Singapore

v Has anyone else among your family members or relatives joined you since you came to live in this country?

- a. Yes
- b. No



Can you please tell me who they are, and their ages and occupations before they came here? Did you/your family* sponsor their move?

Relationship to Respondent	Age at departure	Occupation in Singapore	Sponsored? Yes/No

II. REASON FOR MIGRATION

1 In your family, who made the decision to migrate?

- a. Self
- b. Spouse
- c. Joint decision (self and spouse)
- d. Others (specify: _____)

2 People choose to migrate for a variety of reasons. Can you please tell me your/your family's* reasons for migrating?

3 Why did you/your family* choose Australia/Canada*, and not elsewhere?

* Delete as necessary

III. ADJUSTMENT IN OVERSEAS COMMUNITIES

1 Now I would like to learn more about your experiences in this country. For example, your experiences in relation to your employment, social life, standard of living etc..

Employment:

i What were you working as in Singapore before you came to this country? What was your first occupation here? What is your present occupation?

In Singapore:	_____	} (if different)
Upon arrival:	_____	
Now:	_____	

ii Why did you change your job when you arrived here? ←

iii How did you get your first job in this country?

iv How about the other members of your family? Did they change their occupations after coming to this country? What were the reasons for their change?

- a. No one changed job
- b. Some changed job (specify number: _____)

Reasons for job change:

v Would you say that your current family income is higher, the same or lower than what you would have received in Singapore?

- a. Higher
- b. The same
- c. Lower

* Delete as necessary

Standard of Living:

i How would you rate your standard of living now: Is it higher, the same or lower than when you were in Singapore?

- a. Higher
- b. The same
- c. Lower

→ Why do you say that your present standard of living is higher/lower* than when you were in Singapore?

- a. Housing:
- b. Car:
- c. Other consumer durables:
- d. Attendance at cultural events:
- e. Leisure/recreation/travel:
- f. Others (specify):

ii Would you say that your present standard of living is higher, the same or lower than it would be if you had remained in Singapore?

- a. Higher
- b. The same
- c. Lower

→ Why do you say that your present standard of living is higher/lower* than it would have been?

- a. Housing:
- b. Car:
- c. Other consumer durables:
- d. Attendance at cultural events:
- e. Leisure/recreation/travel:
- f. Others (specify):

iii How would you rate your family's standard of living in comparison to the standard of living of the average Australian/Canadian* family?

- a. Higher
- b. The same
- c. Lower

* Delete as necessary

iv

Comparing Australia/Canada* and Singapore, are you able to save more here than in Singapore?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Social Adjustment:

- i Thinking about your friends in this country, what percentage would you say are local Australians/Canadians*, Singaporeans or ex-Singaporeans, and other immigrants or foreigners?

Percent

Locals

Singaporeans/ex-Singaporeans

Other immigrants/Foreigners

- ii How often do you do the following with your:
 - a. local Australian/Canadian* friends?
 - b. Singaporean or ex-Singaporean friends?
 - c. other immigrant/foreigner friends?

[Interviewer: Go down the list of activities for each of the above groups of people and tick the relevant column below]

Activities	Locals				S'poreans				Others			
	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d
a. visit each other's home												
b. go out together												
c. talk over the fence/ on the phone												
d. eat together												
e. lend/borrow household items												
f. confide in each other												

Frequency

- a = every day
- b = several times a month
- c = only on occasions
- d = never

* Delete as necessary

iii Other than at your workplace, are you a member of any local organizations or clubs?

- a. Yes
- b. No



What are the names of these clubs and organizations, what types of organizations are these, and what office do you hold in them?

Organization/Club	Type of Organization	Office held

iv On the whole, how would you rate your social life here as compared to your social life in Singapore? Would you say that you have more, the same or less social life now than in Singapore?

- a. More
- b. The same
- c. Less

v I want you to say whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements:

[Interviewer: Go down the list and tick the answer in the relevant column]

	SA	A	Neutral	D	SD
a. At restaurants, I feel I am treated as well as white customers.					
b. In the shops, I feel I am treated in the same way as whites.					
c. At school, my children feel they are treated in the same way as white children					
d. I feel I will be promoted in my job like my white colleagues					

Cultural Adjustments:

- i What Australian/Canadian* festivals or holidays do you celebrate?

- ii What Singaporean festivals or holidays do you celebrate here?

Political Adjustment:

- i Are you currently a citizen of this country?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

→ Do you plan to become a citizen, and why?

- ii Since moving to this country, have you voted in any election for political office?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

→ Can you tell me your reasons for not participating?

 - a. Not interested
 - b. Not eligible
 - c. No need to (no election so far)
 - d. Don't feel that I should
 - e. Others (specify)

* Delete as necessary

iii Have you ever spoken publicly on any social or political issues in this country?

- a. Yes
- b. No

→ What issues have you spoken about?

→ Where have you done so?

- a. In the newspapers
- b. On television/radio
- c. At public forums
- d. Others (specify)

→ Can you tell me your reasons for not doing so?

- a. Not interested
- b. Not eligible
- c. No need to (no issue to discuss)
- d. Don't feel that I should speak out
- e. Others (specify)

iv Do you feel that you have more political freedom here than in Singapore? Why?

v Do you feel that you are free to do anything here compared to your stay in Singapore? Why?

IV. CONTACTS WITH OTHER OVERSEAS SINGAPOREANS

1 Are any members of your immediate family or your in-laws, relatives or friends from Singapore living in this country?

[Interviewer: Enter answers in table below. For each family member, relative or friend mentioned, ask]:

Where is he/she living?

How often are you in contact with _____?

How do you keep contact?

Relationship to Respondent	Place of Residence			Frequency of Contacts				Type of Contacts					
	a	b	c	a	b	c	d	a	b	c	d	e	

Place

- a = same city
- b = same state/ province
- c = other states/ provinces

Frequency

- a = every day
- b = several times a month
- c = only on occasions
- d = never

Type

- a = visits
- b = telephone
- c = mail
- d = remittances
- e = others (specify)

2 How do you keep yourself informed about Singapore?

- 1 Newspapers
- 2 Talking to friends
- 3 Letters from relatives
- 4 Special meetings
- 5 Former colleagues in Singapore
- 6 From visitors from Singapore
- 7 From Singapore Embassy
- 8 Others (specify): _____

3 How often do you hear news about Singapore?

- 1 Very often
- 2 Once a month
- 3 Occasionally
- 4 Only when I meet fellow Singaporeans
- 5 Not at all

4 Do you maintain contacts with any of the following.

- 1 The institution you studied
- 2 The office you worked
- 3 Others: (specify) _____

Could you name the institution or office :

VI RETURNING HOME

1 I would like you to assess the following statements with reference to yourself. [Read each statement]. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with this statement?

	SA	A	Neutral	D	SD
a Miss Singapore in daily life					
b Miss Singapore once in a while					
c Want to return for holidays					
d Prefer to remain as Singapore citizen					
e Returning after children are educated and independent					
f Returning after job retirement					
g No intention to return for staying permanently					
h Will return if a better job offer exists in Singapore					
i Made a hasty decision in leaving Singapore					
j Encourage children to return to Singapore to settle down					

- 2 Now I would like you to assess the statements with reference to people you know. [Read each statement]. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with this statement?

	SA	A	Neutral	D	SD
a Miss Singapore in daily life					
b Miss Singapore once in a while					
c Want to return for holidays					
d Prefer to remain as Singapore citizen					
e Returning after children are educated and independent					
f Returning after job retirement					
g No intention to return for staying permanently					
h Will return if a better job offer exists in Singapore					
i Made a hasty decision in leaving Singapore					
j Encourage children to return to Singapore to settle down					

- 3 I am interested in knowing how government agencies and other organisations in Singapore can help Singaporeans living abroad.
- 4 Please tell me whether you or your family members would want to return to Singapore?
- 5 Please tell me the conditions under which you or your family members would return and settle down in Singapore.

6. As far as you know, under what conditions are other Singaporeans likely to return to Singapore?

7. How do you think overseas Singaporeans can help Singapore?

VII. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. I would also like to know your response to the questions in Form 1.

2. I would like to know more about yourself and your family members living in this house. Please fill in the information in Form 2.

3. Now I want you to indicate your gross annual family income.
[Show Form 3]

4. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Here is a list of goals or values that some people consider important. I want to know how important these things are to you personally.

VALUES

Would you say your chances of having a peaceful life in this country are high, medium or low? How about in Singapore - are the chances high medium or low?

(CONTINUE DOWN LIST OF VALUES)

(CONTINUE DOWN LIST OF VALUES)

Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important		Present Country					Singapore			
				H	M	L	DK		H	M	L	DK
			1. Having a peaceful life									
			2. Living in a healthful environment									
			3. Having comfortable housing									
			4. Having a job that is not too strenuous									
			5. Having good opportunities for education for yourself or your children									
			6. Having a prestigious job									
			7. Being looked up to in the community									
			8. Saving money									
			9. Having a regular stable income									
			10. Having economic security for old age									
			11. Having a high income									
			12. Having a high standard of living									
			13. Having people to rely on in time of need									
			14. Living in a familiar environment									
			15. Living near friends and relatives									
			16. Having a feeling of 'belonging' in the community									
			17. Living in a community that is a good place to raise children									
			18. Having freedom to do what you want to do									
			19. Being able to meet a variety of people									
			20. Having a variety of entertainment available									

H = High
M = Medium
L = Low
DK = Don't know

	<u>Annual Family Income</u>	<u>In Singapore before migration</u>	<u>At present in Australia/ Canada*</u>
1	S\$ 25,000 and below		
2	S\$ 25,001 - S\$ 35,000		
3	S\$ 35,001 - S\$ 45,000		
4	S\$ 45,001 - S\$ 55,000		
5	S\$ 55,001 - S\$ 65,000		
6	S\$ 65,001 - S\$ 75,000		
7	S\$ 75,001 - S\$ 85,000		
8	S\$ 85,001 - S\$ 95,000		
9	S\$ 95,001 - S\$105,000		
10	S\$105,001 - S\$115,000		
11	S\$115,001 - S\$125,000		
12	S\$125,001 - S\$135,000		
13	S\$135,001 - S\$145,000		
14	Over S\$145,000		

* Delete as necessary

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Serial No:

--	--

1 Time interview ended _____

2 Was anyone else present at interview? If so, who:

3 Was respondent cooperative?

4 Any other comments/observation?

11 Jan 90
QUEST1

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